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U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

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ROBERT S. RANGEL, STAFF DIRECTOR

June 15, 2005

The Honorable Duncan Hunter
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I write to renew my request that the Armed Services Committee hold hearings to examine the issue of the treatment of detainees held at prison facilities operated by the United States military, particularly the one at our base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Recent media reports suggest that inappropriate interrogation techniques have been employed during the questioning of detainees at the Guantanamo facility. My concern is that these allegations raise the prospect of perhaps a more pervasive problem with the policy toward and treatment of detainees than may have been apparent from past reports related to Iraq and Afghanistan. Even if it is as you suggest that these allegations are only the result of a few bad apples and not some broader policy or systemic failure, we on the Armed Services Committee have a constitutional duty to perform oversight, to learn the facts, and to legislate corrective measures where it is appropriate.

As you know, we all support our troops and want to make sure they have every advantage on the battlefield. However, we must not provide terrorist insurgents with gratuitous reasons to oppose or attack our forces by failing to rectify abuses that have occurred with detainees under our control. We need a transparent inquiry to show the world that we are a nation of laws, not of men, that we are better than the terrorists, and that accountability matters. I believe that hearings on this topic would help achieve this result.

Thank you for your attention to this request. I look forward to your reply in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ike', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Ike Skelton
Ranking Democrat